

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 11550 120528Z

12

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7965

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 11550

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, BG

SUBJECT: PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

REF: STATE 252256; DACCA 5316; DACCA 5462; STATE 267372

1. I DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF ABOVE FOUR MESSAGES GROWING OUT OF THE SECRETARY'S TALKS IN BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN ON THE SUBJECT OF PAK-BANGLADESH RELATIONS YESTERDAY WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI. IN ADDITION, SO THAT POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING WOULD BE AVOIDED, I LEFT AN AIDE MEMOIRE CONTAINING THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THESE CABLED EXCHANGES. SHAHI SAID HE WOULD INFORM BHUTTO OF OUR DISCUSSION. FROM HIS COMMENTS, HOWEVER, I WOULD EXPECT NO NEW INITIATIVE FROM HERE ON PAK-BANGLADESH DIFFICULTIES FOR AT LEAST SOME TIME.

2. SHAHI SAID THAT IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY AND OTHERS, THAT THE BENGALLEES, PERHAPS IN ORDER TO APPEAR MORE REASONABLE, ARE NOW REINTERPRETING THE POSITION THEY TOOK IN THE BILATERAL TALKS OF LAST JUNE. IT WAS NOT, HE SAID, THAT THEY WANTED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE SHWNING OF ASSETS. THE HARD FACTS WERE THAT THEY WANTED 56 PERCENT OF ALL ASSETS IMMEDIATELY WITH NO DISCUSSION OF SHARING OF LIABILITIES. HE SAID THIS POSITION SEEMED MOST UNREASONABLE TO THE PAKS, AND TO MOST EVERYONE ELSE, AND HENCE THE EFFORT NOW TO GLOSS OVER THEIR POSITION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 11550 120528Z

SHAHI SAID THAT BHUTTO HAD TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THIS WAS

A MATTER OF SUFFICIENT COMPLEXITY TO WARRANT TALKS ON THE EXPERT LEVEL, WHICH PAKISTAN WAS QUITE PREPARED TO DO. BHUTTO HAD ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHEN THE EXPERTS MET AN IMPASSE, AS IT WAS INDEED PROBABLE THEY WOULD, THE MATERIAL THEY HAD DEVELOPED COULD BE SUBMITTED UPSTAIRS FOR POSSIBLE RESOLUTION BY BHUTTO AND MUJIB PERSONALLY. THE PAKS FELT THEN, AND INDEED FEEL NOW, THAT THIS WAS A REASONABLE POSITION; THEY RESENT THE FACT THAT MUJIB AND OTHERS CONTINUE TO DISTORT THE PAK POSITION.

3. SHAHI SPOKE WITH SOME FEELING ABOUT EVIDENCE THEY HAVE THAT MUJIB AND OTHERS SEEM TO LOSE NO OPPORTUNITY TO MALIGN PAKISTAN IN OTHER CAPITALS, AND PARTICULARLY IN OTHER MUSLIM CAPITALS. HE SAID HE WAS APPALLED AT THE NUMBER OF MUSLIM FRIENDS WHO CAME TO HIM AT THE UNITED NATIONS REFERRING TO MALICIOUS PRESENTATIONS THE BENGALEES HAD MADE TO THEM ABOUT PAKISTAN. HE SAID IT WOULD SEEM THAT MUJIB HAS AN OBSESSION TO PLACE ALL THE BLAME FOR TROUBLES IN BANGLADESH ON THE PAKS, AND IS STILL MAKING MUCH OF HIS CLAIM THAT THE PAKS MURDERED 3 MILLION OF HIS PEOPLE, HAD EXPLOITED EAST PAKISTAN IN A MANNER WHICH LED TO ALL OF TODAY'S PROBLEMS IN BANGLADESH, ETC. DURING HIS VISIT TO THE U.N., MUJIB HAD PERSONALLY TAKEN THIS LINE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND WITH THE AMERICAN PRESS, AS PRESS TREATMENT CLEARLY SHOWED.

4. SHAHI SAID ALL THIS WAS A KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT TO HIM PERSONALLY AS HE HAD HOPED NORMALIZATION WITH RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH COULD HAVE MOVED MORE SMOOTHLY AND RAPIDLY. HE SAID HE FEARED THAT THE HARSH PROTRAYAL OF PAKISTAN MIGHT BE AIMED AT INDUCING OTHERS TO GIVE MORE ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH. IT MIGHT ALSO BE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSUMPTION STEMMING FROM A DESIRE BY LEADERS OF BANGLADESH TO BLAME OTHERS FOR CURRENT DIFFICULTIES THERE. SHAHI RHETORICALLY ASKED HOW, IF EITHER OF THESE TWO THINGS WERE INDEED FACTORS, THERE COULD BE A CLIMATE FOR PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

5. I TOLD SHAHI I WAS DISAPPOINTED TO HEAR HIM SPEAK  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 11550 120528Z

IN SUCH A DISCOURAGING TONE AND HOPED THAT A BETTER CLIMATE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. I SAID THAT ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER, WE WOULD REMAIN READY TO BE HELPFUL IF THE PARTIES EVER DECIDED THAT WE COULD BE USEFUL. I MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT WE DID NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY FURTHER INITIATIVE AT THIS TIME.  
BYROADE

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## Message Attributes

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